

currents

Fall 2016

The news, people, & progress of the Graduate Theological Union

DOUG ADAMS GALLERY

The Arts, Religion, and the GTU's New Gallery

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the hermitage of *landscape*
works by nicholas colley



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- "Spiritual Ecology" panel discussion with President Riess Potterveld, Devin Zuber (CSS), Rita Sherma (CDS) and Cynthia Moe-Lobeda (PLTS/CDSP) (*photo by Yohana Junker*)
- Left Coast Chamber Ensemble musicians Andrea Mich (flute) and Leighton Fong (cello) (*photo by Peg Skorpinski*)
- Background: Entrance to the New Doug Adams Gallery (*photo by Lily Manderville*)

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ONE OF MY DISCIPLINES AS president of the GTU is to scan the thick magazines published by universities, colleges, and theological schools to monitor the evolution of education. There are an incredible number of stories about students, faculty, and whole academic fields seeking to impact specific global issues.

Recently, the GTU secured a grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations to encourage research that seeks to address particular global challenges. Through this new program, cohorts of students, with a faculty mentor, can apply for \$5,000 grants to encourage their research into a persistent, perplexing problem (such as religious conflict, status of women in the world, or climate change). Each cohort must be interreligious, and each project must engage a grassroots organization focused on the same concern and offering practical solutions. Each group must also find a way to share the outcome of its research with wider publics at the GTU and beyond.

Our hope is that these small grants will further the kind of work that is already occurring throughout the GTU. Across the entire consortium, students and faculty are busy probing critical social issues and bringing to bear the clarity of critical thinking, ethical values, and theological considerations. These small grants will, we hope, promote the value of our new interreligious and interdisciplinary work and underscore how our religious and wisdom traditions can shape solutions to perplexing and persistent problems. Although religion is often perceived as a source of conflict in our world, solutions often come from people who believe their faith calls them to bear special responsibility for the care of human and non-human life, and indeed the whole planet.

A week ago, our GTU community was visited by several members of the International

Society for Krishna Consciousness, including His Grace, Gauranga Das, President of Govardhan Eco Village, located outside of Mumbai. In his public presentation, Gauranga Das introduced us to this village of 300 people that reuses everything in an effort to create a completely sustainable cycle of life. The village has utilized inventive engineering and science to attain its systems, but the principles and values energizing this village derive from the reading and study of ancient sacred texts.

Dr. Devin Zuber, Associate Professor of American Studies, Religion, and Literature at the Center for Swedenborgian Studies (a GTU affiliate), offered a response to the presentation. Having freshly returned from a sabbatical in Europe where he visited and studied eco-villages in Germany, Zuber was able to explain that in Europe, these efforts are often undertaken by people living in urban or rural enclaves who are intent upon holistic and sustainable living practices.

These ideas and efforts press upon us urgently given the mounting evidence of climate change, the scarcity of potable water, and our awareness of the finitude and extinction of natural resources. At the GTU, we believe the theological education process is not only to enlighten and prepare scholars, educators, and community leaders, but to create individuals who will be intentional about a vocational life devoted to positive change. We will be eager to see which issues our students choose to address through their projects and what results from their engagement. We look forward to sharing their stories with you.



GTU students and faculty are busy probing critical issues and seeking solutions to persistent problems.

Russ Patterson

By Elizabeth S. Peña

The NEW Center for the Arts & Religion at the GTU



Picturing things, taking a view, is what makes us human; art is making sense and giving shape to that sense. It is like the religious search for God.

—Gerhard Richter

The arts—literature, dance, music, and the visual arts—enhance religious experience and evoke transcendence. Artistic expression often provides common ground for scholars and practitioners representing a wide variety of faith traditions. In the classroom the arts offer entry into complex concepts and philosophies. These are just a few of the reasons why the Center for the Arts & Religion (CARE) is happy to be making its new home at the Graduate Theological Union as a new GTU academic center.

CARE's connection to the GTU has a long history, as the Center for the Arts & Religion (formerly the Center for the Arts, Religion, and Education) has been housed at Pacific School of Religion since its founding as an independent nonprofit in 1987. But CARE and the GTU recently decided the time was right for the GTU to incorporate the Center for the Arts & Religion as an integrated program unit. GTU President Riess Potterveld explains, "The interface of the arts and religion is a central component in the curriculum of the GTU's MA and PhD degree programs, its Centers, and the professional degree programs of many member schools. Now that CARE is placed in the very center of the GTU, faculty, students, and the public will be enriched by the stimulating resources and learning opportunities CARE provides each year."

The transition brings with it some exciting changes, including the relocating of CARE's gallery and offices to the GTU's Le Conte Building. Those who recall the old GTU bookstore will find that space has been redesigned—and that's where you'll find the new Doug Adams Gallery as well as the offices for the Center for the Arts & Religion. "Having CARE and the Doug Adams Gallery in the Le Conte Building strengthens the heart of the GTU," notes Kathleen Kook, Dean of Students. "It gives students the chance to think about creative expression as well as scholarship, and creates a more vibrant community for all."

Dr. Munir Jiwa, Director of the Center for Islamic Studies and a member of CARE's Advisory Board, celebrates the welcoming of CARE as a program of the GTU: "CARE plays a critical role in advancing the arts

“Talking about contemporary art and religion in the same breath is taboo at most art institutions. It is encouraged and taken seriously at the Center for the Arts & Religion. As a fully integrated academic program of the GTU, with a beautiful new gallery in North Berkeley, CARE is poised to become a vital arts center in the East Bay.”

*—Alla Efimova, CARE advisory board member,
founder and principal of KunstWorks*



and artists in the context of the GTU’s rich diversity of religious traditions and cultures, and serves as an important place for aesthetic encounters much needed in the world today. I am delighted that CARE is now an academic program unit of the GTU, and even more delighted to serve on the advisory board.”

CARE’s move to the GTU comes with the gift of a \$5.8 million endowment. Those funds will continue to sustain the Center for the Arts & Religion, supporting the Doug Adams Gallery, courses in the arts and religion, and student and faculty grants, as well as music, dance, studio art, and other specialty programs. President Potterveld notes, “We anticipate that these considerable financial assets will empower cutting-edge programs and courses in the arts and religion each year. With this generous gift the endowment of the GTU has surpassed \$40 million for the first time.”

For CARE, becoming a GTU academic center means a sharper focus on mission rather than management. It means better connections across the GTU, expanded outreach, and a bigger role within the GTU community. Joining the GTU will enhance CARE’s grant-seeking and fundraising, in collaboration with other academic centers and colleagues across the consortium.

The mission of the Center for the Arts & Religion, “to promote scholarship, reflection, and practice in the arts and religion to serve the GTU and to benefit the community,” remains the same. CARE works toward this mission in several ways.

CARE presents exhibitions, public programs, and lectures. The exhibitions connect visual art to spirituality, and provide a background for creative programming designed for both the GTU audience and the broader community. For example, in coordination with a spring 2017 exhibition on Islamic art, CARE will revive the Dillenberger Lecture Series. GTU students will take on leadership roles in this project under the direction of CARE/PSR Associate Professor of Art and Religion, Dr. Rossitza Schroeder.

Seeking to provide courses the GTU could not otherwise offer, CARE presents the GTU’s only studio

art courses, as well as specialized classes in dance, museum studies, theater, and other fields. This intersession (January 2017), CARE will experiment with a poetry workshop, “Writing our Faiths,” open to both GTU students and community members.

CARE offers modest grants to GTU students and faculty to support arts-related research, projects, and activities. In addition, faculty are eligible to apply for arts enrichment grants, and students for a writing prize. Award winners are invited to present on their projects at one of the monthly “Brown Bag Lunch” presentations in the Doug Adams Gallery, or to blog about their work for the CARE website (www.care-gtu.edu). As GTU PhD student Yohana Junker explains, “CARE is a place of convergence for the arts, for people to rethink and critically engage with the arts, and to tease out the implications of doing and interpreting the arts and religion.” Junker notes that CARE’s growing partnerships with Bay Area groups such as the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble, and the Berkeley Center for the Study of Religion foster opportunities for student participation.

The Doug Adams Gallery is also the site for informal events including class visits, student gatherings, book launches, and even a monthly yoga-in-the-gallery hour!

While the focus of CARE’s work is unchanged, you may notice the shift in the name, as the Center for the Arts, Religion, and Education will now be known as the Center for the Arts & Religion. The new acronym, CARE, reflects both change and continuity, with new lettering echoing the new name, Center for the Arts & Religion.

This new phase in CARE’s work builds on the efforts of many others. CARE was founded in 1987 by PSR Professor Doug Adams. A much beloved teacher and charismatic leader, Doug’s vision was to promote the integration of the arts into worship and practice. He built CARE into a vibrant organization thanks to his personal appeal and his fundraising skills, which were matched by his own generosity.

After Doug passed away in 2007, CARE’s



(left) Artist Nicholas Coley in conversation with Eduardo Faustino and GTU PhD Student Hannah Pheasant Faustino; (upper right) GTU PhD candidate Colette Walker enjoys the exhibition; (lower right) Rich Smith (CARe Board, PSR alumnus), Marianne Lettieri (CARe guest artist), Carol Bier (GTU/CIS visiting scholar), and Joan Carter (founding CARe Board member) at the opening reception. Photos by Peg Skorpinski

continuity was ensured through the admirable efforts of CARE's Board of Trustees. They hired Carin Jacobs as Executive Director; not only did Carin provide crucial leadership in Doug's absence, but in 2009, she opened the Doug Adams Gallery in his memory. The Doug Adams Gallery was at home at the Pacific School of Religion's Holbrook Building, sharing the majestic former library space with PSR's Badè Museum of Biblical Archaeology.

The Doug Adams Gallery continued to grow following Carin's departure in 2013, becoming a center for student events and public programs, as well as exhibitions. Brown bag lunchtime presentations became a monthly feature, artists' talks were presented, and studio art classes were set up in the Gallery.

While CARE continued to thrive, in 2016, the CARE Board of Trustees agreed that the financial and administrative challenges of maintaining independent nonprofit status detracted from the organization's

ability to work toward its mission. Discussions with the GTU showed the way forward; joining the GTU would allow CARE to concentrate on programs, courses, and events, leaving administrative and management concerns to the GTU.

Rev. David Howell, outgoing CARE Board President (PSR MA '98, MDiv '01), summarized, "Doug Adams transformed the way so many of us do ministry through his teaching and his passion for the arts. His legacy lives on in CARe, and I am thrilled that we are strengthening our ties to the GTU to ensure that future generations of students will have even greater access and opportunities in the arts."

Throughout its history, CARE has been committed to the GTU consortium. CARE's new status as a GTU academic center will forge even stronger connections, facilitating communication and fostering collaboration. Dr. Kathryn Barush, Assistant Professor of Art History and Religion at the GTU

and the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University, notes, "Providing students with contextual learning opportunities is imperative in art historical education. With CARe as an academic program unit physically located right on the GTU campus, exploration of religious art up-close and in person is possible from semester to semester, allowing students to have a close look at objects as well as to hear directly from the artists and curators that bring these high-quality exhibitions to fruition."

The first exhibition in the new Doug Adams Gallery is "The Hermitage of Landscape: Works by Nicholas Coley." These luminous landscape paintings will be on display through December 9. CARE first learned of Nick Coley's work through an article in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, in which Coley described standing in the middle of a forest to paint, and feeling the presence of God. Showing these paintings in the Doug Adams Gallery provides

CTNS Turns 35— and Becomes a GTU Program!

the opportunity to think about the connections between nature and spirituality. In early October the gallery hosted a panel discussion on spiritual ecology, moderated by GTU President Riess Potterveld, and featuring GTU colleagues Cynthia Moe-Lobeda (PLTS/CDSP), Rita Sherma (CDS), and Devin Zuber (CSS). On November 3, CARE will present a musical perspective on nature and spirituality, thanks to the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble. All are invited to these free events.

In the spring semester, Dr. Carol Bier, visiting scholar at the GTU's Center for Islamic Studies, will serve as guest curator for "Reverberating Echoes: Contemporary Art Inspired by Traditional Islamic Art." This exhibition, on display in the Doug Adams Gallery from January 31 to May 26, will feature seven artists from across the United States who work in media ranging from textiles to 3-D printing. In addition to demonstrating the richness of Islamic visual heritage, this exhibition will offer multiple opportunities for discussion and reflection. Of special note is the March 15 Dillenberger Lecture, featuring Dr. Alicia Walker from Bryn Mawr College speaking on the significance of Arabic motifs in medieval Christian art and architecture.

With exhibitions like these, along with compelling programming, interesting courses, and other creative activities in the new Doug Adam Gallery, the Center for the Arts & Religion is delighted to take its place in the GTU family, helping create meaningful arts experiences for GTU students, faculty, staff, and the wider community.

Elizabeth S. Peña is director of the GTU's Center for the Arts & Religion and the Doug Adams Gallery.

On Tuesday, October 18, the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences (CTNS) celebrated its 35th anniversary—and its new beginning as an internal program of the GTU. CTNS became a GTU program unit earlier this year, after a long and successful history as an independent nonprofit affiliated with the GTU. The October 18th celebration featured a retrospective by CTNS Director Robert Russell touching on the major facets of CTNS's eventful history, as well as words of encouragement from current and former CTNS staff, students, and colleagues.

The GTU and the CTNS Board of Directors began pursuing the possibility of CTNS joining the GTU as an internal program unit several years ago. This was done with recognition of the deep consonance between the two institutions, and in an effort to secure a permanent home for the Ian G. Barbour Chair in Theology and Science and the rest of the CTNS program. The Ian Barbour Chair was established by CTNS ten years ago, beginning with \$1 million Ian gave to CTNS from his 1999 Templeton Prize.

In December 2015, the CTNS Board transferred to the GTU the Barbour Chair as well as its two endowment funds: the Russell Family Fellowship in Religion and Science and the Charles H. Townes Graduate Student Fellowship. The combined gift was worth approximately \$2.1 million. Then, in May 2016, CTNS transferred the journal *Theology and Science* as well as other CTNS programming to the GTU.

GTU President Riess Potterveld celebrated the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences becoming a permanent part of the GTU: "Since its founding, CTNS has brought to the world stage issues integral to the discourse in science and religion, and it has been breaking new ground through its innovative research, teaching, and contributions to the public conversation. We are delighted to welcome the Center into a new and even more vital relationship as a program and an integral part of the Graduate Theological Union."

Already enjoying the benefits of its new relationship with the GTU, CTNS is looking ahead to a future of exciting programming, scholarship, and publications at the forefront of the conversation between theology and the natural sciences, as well as the continuing fruits of the now permanent Barbour Chair in Theology and Science at the GTU.



GTU doctoral students Austen Eikenberry and Daekyung Jung with CTNS Director Bob Russell during a recent GTU doctoral seminar on "Christian Theology and Natural Science."

By Doug Davidson

The Mysterious Journey of Barbara Green

Our 2016 Sarlo Award winner discusses theological education, diversity at the GTU, and the joys of writing

Dr. Barbara Green, O.P., first heard about the Graduate Theological Union in 1964, when she entered the Dominican Convent in San Rafael, California, to begin her training to become a religious sister. “The priest who taught us would come in and, instead of focusing on Saint Thomas or whatever was scheduled for that day, he’d talk about this exciting new project up in Berkeley where Catholics and Protestants were working together.”

Dr. Green, or Sister Barbara as she’s known by many students, couldn’t have imagined then how intertwined her life’s journey would become with this “new project” up on the hill in Berkeley. Sitting in the convent that day, Green says she had “no idea where she was headed.” She didn’t know her order would send her to the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley six years later to pursue an MA in Biblical Studies, or that she’d go on to earn a doctorate in Near Eastern Studies through a joint program offered by the GTU and the University of California, Berkeley. She didn’t expect that, after five years as a high-school teacher and twelve years teaching undergraduates at Dominican University, she’d return to the GTU to become a professor of Biblical Studies at the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology. And Barbara Green couldn’t have imagined that, after nearly a quarter century teaching at the GTU, she’d receive the GTU’s 2016 Sarlo Excellence in Teaching Award, honoring her interreligious commitment, interdisciplinary approach, sensitivity to diversity, and creative and effective pedagogy.

Green believes the diversity of the GTU community creates great opportunities for broadening the perspective of her students. As Professor of Biblical Studies at the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology, she teaches classes in Hebrew Bible at all



levels, as well as some New Testament classes. She enjoys the challenges of working with students across the consortium: “Bible has always been an area at the GTU where students can really explore, where there’s less need for students to take classes at their own particular school.” This means diverse classrooms, and dialogue that touches on the real issues and conflicts that shape our world.

Dr. Green believes it’s essential that people of faith learn to dialogue respectfully across religious traditions without setting aside their own commitments. “Openness to other traditions doesn’t mean individuals aren’t committed to their own tradition, or that they won’t continue to live it very intentionally. But we can all do that without denying other groups a place at the table.”

“I really enjoy opening up the ears of my Christian students to how critical the Hebrew Bible is for understanding the New Testament,” Green says. “That’s my favorite part of the interreligious work I do, helping Christians see how much richer their understanding of the New Testament can be when we acknowledge its Hebrew Bible roots.” She acknowledges that there’s “a lot to do there,” because students may be unaware of how anti-Jewish attitudes have shaped the Christian tradition or their own thinking. In a recent New Testament course, she sought to help students understand how “powerfully present the Hebrew Bible

and the feasts of the Jewish calendar year are in the Gospel of John.” Acknowledging that some passages of that Gospel “sound very anti-Jewish,” she sought to help students “adjust their ears” to better understand the context in which they were written. “We can understand that in the first century, Judaism was beleaguered because of the Romans; their temple had been destroyed.” This history provides a context that can help offer a “structure of understanding” around first-century Judaism.

Dr. Green celebrates how the strong Jewish presence at the GTU through its Center for Jewish Studies “challenges Christians to learn a lot of things we might not have otherwise learned.” She also remembers the early conversations, some fifteen years ago, that preceded the GTU’s establishment of the Center for Islamic Studies in 2007. “Every time a new tradition is added to the GTU,” says Green, “we all have to re-examine where we are on a host of issues.” This is both one of the beauties and the tensions of the GTU today. “We sometimes think we’ve got it solved, but it’s always challenging.”

Over her quarter century on the GTU faculty, Green has seen changes in both the student population and the educational environment. “Today’s students are different from their parents; different from even their older brothers and sisters,” she says. “I don’t think anyone would disagree that students are not reading the way they used to read. The library used to be filled with people; now it doesn’t always have to be. People access material via the Web, they move around on their screens.” Green believes theological educators need to be adaptable, to design their courses to meet the needs of the people who are present. “We need to find what will work for them; to figure out the right combination of technology, group work, library research, and new kinds of learning. That’s fun, for the most part.”

Sister Barbara celebrates the ways her students consistently push her into areas of inquiry that she would not have investigated otherwise. As one example she cites students interested in anthropologist René Girard’s work around violence and nonviolence. “I wouldn’t have pursued that on my own. I’m interested in nonviolence, but more the nonviolence of the Dalai Lama or Gandhi. But when I had several people who wanted to study Girard, I was happy to do it. That’s where students should be getting their money’s worth; when they have an interest, and faculty don’t know that much about it, we have the leisure to find out—and it can be lots of fun to do that.”

Green’s students have also broadened her appre-

“There are always fresh challenges and new things to learn.”

ciation of the visual arts, an interest that shaped her approach on her upcoming book, *David’s Capacity for Compassion*. “I spent three years studying the biblical character of David, trying to pin down how he moves from these flaws we all know about to this compassion we find later in his life. The high point, of course is where David mourns for his son—but that, in a sense, comes from nowhere, because he’d been struggling with Absalom right up until the day he died.” Green knew she wanted to “find

an image that would draw more out of the story,” so she turned to a former doctoral student for help in finding the right one. Eventually she discovered a piece by the 17th century Venetian painter Giambattista Pittoni. “The painting shows David before the Ark of the Covenant. His harp is thrown down; he is pictured from the back, but you can see he’s in anguish. It’s not so clear what he’s praying about, but it’s clear he’s in distress.” Green sees the image as representative of a moment in which David “leaves behind some of the arrogance he had as a king” so he can become a gentler and more compassionate person.

In addition to her scholarly writing, Barbara Green has also written three works of imaginative fiction, each of which re-envision a key Bible story in the form of a contemporary mystery. “The challenge is to make the plot of the biblical tale work in a modern context,” she says. “If you didn’t know the Bible story, you could still read each one as a mystery.” The three books are all set at the GTU, and feature a fictional GTU professor as the lead character. The book based on Ruth involves a theft from the rotunda in the downstairs of the GTU library; the story of Joseph and his brothers is retold through a large Italian family that owns a nearby Berkeley grocery store. “There aren’t any real GTU names,” Green says, “but they’re usually combinations of people. And there’s no really bad people or real malevolence; the characters are mostly like us.”

Despite a quarter century at the GTU, Sister Barbara recognizes that each new group of students she encounters will present new questions and different issues that demand new approaches. “No teacher at any level today can simply rest on her laurels and think, ‘OK, I have solved this.’ There are always fresh challenges and new things to learn.” It is that desire to continue to grow as a scholar, an educator, and a person that makes Dr. Barbara Green a worthy recipient of the GTU’s 2016 Sarlo Award.

Doug Davidson is the Director of Communications at the GTU.

By Purushottama Bilimoria

Jainism: A Living Tradition

Below: This is a picture of the inner sanctum of the temple at the Jain Center of Northern California. These images are sacred to the Jains, so please treat them with respect. Photo © Nirmal Baid, 2016; all rights reserved.

The founding of the Mira and Ajay Shingal Center for Dharma Studies in 2015 has established a permanent home at the GTU for the academic study of several major religious traditions that originated in ancient India. Among these Dharma traditions is Jainism (or Jaina Dharma), which has a following of some 6 million people, mostly in India but also scattered in other parts of the world. While Jainism's history dates back to the sixth century BCE, its primary principles point toward ethical commitments to nonviolence, pluralism, and ecological wholeness that are deeply relevant to the contemporary challenges of the twenty-first century.



The roots of Jainism can be found in the *śramaṇa* movement, a movement of ascetic, contemplative, spiritual adepts of ancient India. Major tenets of Jain philosophy include: *ahiṃsā* (the avoidance of harm to all living beings); *anekāntavāda* (the avoidance of absolutism, and respect for multiple viewpoints); and *aparigraha* (the avoidance of attachment to the things of this world). Contemporary scholars have employed these three tenets in the service of ecological consciousness, pluralism, and sustainable living.

The ultimate aim of Jainism is *mokṣa* (release from the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, and attainment of liberation into a pure realm of enlightened existence). To this end, Jainism promotes the “three jewels” that constitute the threefold path to liberation: right faith (*śamyak darśana*), right understanding (*śamyak jñāna*), and right conduct (*śamyak chāritra*).

Jaina (or Jain) signifies “one who follows a Jina.” A Jina is not a deity but a human being who has, through certain austerities and renunciate ascetic practices, gained deep knowledge of ultimate truths, and thereby achieved liberation and conquered attachment (*raga*) and aversion (*dveṣa*). The Jina is one who has overcome the cyclical round of birth and

death, thereby breaking the bondage of *karma* that this repetitive cycle entails. This accomplishment, considered the highest human attainment, enables the Jina to transmit the doctrines of Jainism.

A Jina is also known as Tīrthaṅkara (literally, “ford-builder”), which means one who makes pathways to cross *saṃsāra*, “the river of transmigratory suffering.” The Jain religion considers the first Jina to have been Ṛṣibha; and the most recent, the 24th, is the widely recognized Mahāvīra (c. 599-527 BCE) who was an elder contemporary of the Buddha and formulated a number of principles later adopted by Buddhism. Mahāvīra’s teachings helped consolidate and systematize the doctrines of Jainism as we know it today; he was also instrumental in transforming the practices of the forest-ascetics into systematic doctrines that made it possible for both ascetics and lay followers to integrate the praxis into their lives.

There are two major sects within Jainism today: Śvetambaras (“white-clad,” popular among laypeople) and Digambaras (“sky-clad”). People in India are familiar with the common image of Digambara mendicants walking barefoot with minimal possessions. Included among Śvetambaras are two



sub-sects, one that worships images of Tirthankaras (*mūrtipūjaka*) and one that does not (Sthānakavāsīs and Terapanthis); their ascetics wear a white cover over the mouth (*muhpatti*), in order to avoid inhaling (and thus killing) microbes from the air.

Jainism has a complex psychology, cosmology, and metaphysics, which may resonate with developments in modern science and cosmology. Jains view the universe as having existed eternally, conceived as a vast “cosmic being” (*lokapuruṣa*) that can be perceived as an organically connected cosmos. Jain philosophy maintains that there are an infinite number of souls (*jīva*, or the principle of sentience) that come in various categories and potencies, from one- to two-sensed amoebic or microbial creatures, to five-sensed animals, to the more expansive and spiritually evolved souls represented by human beings and celestial beings. Each soul accumulates and must work out accumulated karma appropriate to its existential status in order to progress to the next stage of being. This is achieved mainly through virtuous living and contemplative practices.

Known for their “reverence for all life” (as Albert Schweitzer has put it), Jains are unrelenting in adhering to five basic moral principles: non-violence (*ahiṃsā*), truthfulness (*satya*), non-coveting of others goods (*asteya*), non-possessiveness (*aparigraha*), and sexual continence (*brahmacharya*), which means celibacy in the case of monks and nuns, and virtuous conduct on the part of laypersons. Jain vows are understood to generate positive mental dispositions, with the power of inducing virtuous behavior, self-restraint, and compassion, while also inhibiting karmic inflow; they may even deploy positive karmic inflow (in the form of “earned merit,” or *punya*) towards easing the suffering of oneself and others, including animals.

Jain philosophy emphasizes relinquishing attachment to objects of desire and enticement, including stimulating food and drink (especially intoxicants), the embellishing of the body in distracting colors and designs, and virulent aversions that tie up one’s emotions in negative knots. Anger, fear, anxiety, and aggression are to be restrained for the spiritual advancement of the self and well being of others. Control of speech, control of the mind (through practices of meditation, breathing, and yoga) and exercise of dexterity in all activities are greatly valued in Jain morality. There are “great vows” for the ascetics (with strict sets of practices and conduct) and “smaller vows” (in a descending scale of restrictions) for lay people, children, and the incapacitated.

Existing as corollaries to the Jain principle of right understanding are the twin-doctrines of *syādvāda*—literally “maybe-ness,” which implies that there is

value in alternative perspectives—and *anekāntavāda*, which suggests that, since reality is multifaceted and multidimensional, it is not prudent to cling doggedly to a single viewpoint. Together these doctrines pave the way for a tolerant outlook and provide strong support for pluralism.

Today, Jainism’s call to humans to live in harmony with an environment suffused with sentient life finds great appeal and resonance in the worldwide ecological and sustainable social-living movements. Jainism has made significant contributions internationally to rethinking human attitudes toward violence, endemic war, and the rampant destruction of the environment. This is evident through the twentieth century in the influence on M. K. Gandhi, who drew heavily from the wellspring of Indian spirituality—both his own heritage of Hinduism as well as important principles of Jainism—and whose philosophy shaped U.S. civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. and other nonviolent activists. Jains in large numbers continue to contribute to innovations in sustainable technology and software development, from India to the Silicon Valley.

Purushottama Bilimoria is senior lecturer at the Ajay and Mira Shingal Center for Dharma Studies and core doctoral faculty at the GTU.

Jain Studies at the GTU

Recent courses in Jain Studies at the GTU include:

- “The Self and I in Indic Thought: Jaina, Hindu, and Buddhist” (Fall 2015)
- “Radical Nonviolence: Introduction to Jain Dharma” (Spring 2016)
- “Jain Philosophy and Ethics” (Fall 2016)

An additional course on Jainism will be offered in Spring 2017:

- “Gandhi and Jainism: The Jain Influence and Principles that Shaped the Life and Work of Gandhi”

The GTU is working in partnership with leaders in the Bay Area Jain community to establish a Chair of Jain Studies at the GTU, as well as MA and PhD concentrations in Jain Studies. If you are interested in supporting the expansion of Jain Studies at the GTU, please contact advancement@gtu.edu.

Educational Technology at the GTU and Beyond



Above the desk in my office on the first floor of the GTU library hangs a framed poster that was given to me a couple of years ago. The poster is mostly in black and white and features a picture of an older book opened to stylized Latin text. It's actually an advertisement for IBM, announcing that “www.martinluther.de is an IBM e-business”; the website provides a virtual tour of the Luther museum in Wittenberg, Germany. The book is opened to the *Te igitur* of the Roman Canon.

This poster highlights the question of how the theological disciplines studied at the GTU are impacted by modern communication technologies. As such, it serves as an ideal visualization for thinking about the current and future state of theological education, and how technology shapes my own work here as the new course design specialist at the GTU. (As an aside, my PhD is in liturgical studies, so the content of the book pictured on the poster also brings in my academic discipline.)

The GTU has sought to incorporate emerging technologies into theological education throughout the last couple of decades. An initial push happened in the early 2000s, when smart-classrooms were installed in the GTU library and at the member schools, allowing faculty and students to display multimedia presentations in classroom settings. At the same time, the GTU acquired Blackboard, a popular online learning management system. The library increased its electronic holdings, and the GTU and member schools began to develop courses and programs that

were partially or fully online.

In 2008, responding to the need to continue refreshing our technology in an ever-changing age, the GTU transitioned from Blackboard to Moodle, an open-source online learning management system that better aligned with the collaborative and constructivist pedagogical needs of theological education. That year, in the second year of my PhD program, I was hired to be student coordinator of online learning (commonly known at the GTU as the “Moodle guy”), a position I had until 2013. During that period, the GTU not only rolled out Moodle to be used throughout the consortium, but also increased its training in online teaching techniques.

Technology can shape course design in various ways. But just as the Reformation's use of the Gutenberg printing press was successful only because of the content of the message, the technology in today's theological classroom is only as good as pedagogy behind it. My work here at the GTU goes beyond the online environment to assist

faculty and doctoral students in incorporating all sorts of technology into a variety of classes. Since technology is only helpful if it is well grounded pedagogically, some courses do not necessarily benefit from incorporating the fanciest computer equipment money can buy. In addition, it's essential to remember that "technology" encompasses more than just computers and computer-related products; it also includes the classroom furniture, handouts given to students, 3D-printed models, and the like.

In the upcoming months, I will be working with GTU faculty individually and through group workshops to look at all phases of course design and development, from the construction of learning outcomes to developing interactive content to creating assessable collaboration and artifacts. These are all important components of both residential and online courses.

In focusing on these goals, the GTU is fulfilling and even exceeding the requirements put forth by our accrediting agency, the Association of Theological Schools (ATS): "Institutions using instructional technology to enhance face-to-face courses and/or provide online-only courses shall be intentional in addressing matters of coherence between educational values and choice of media, recognizing that the

learning goals of graduate education should guide the choice of digital resources, that teaching and learning maintains its focus on the formation and knowledge of religious leaders, and that the school is utilizing its resources in ways that most effectively accomplish this purpose." (ATS General Institutional Standard 8.8)

In another document, ATS refers specifically to the function I see as essential to my own work, that of "bridging functions between technology and theological education, between theological curriculum and delivery systems, between teachers and learners..." (ATS ES.4.2.12).

On the ground level for the GTU's effective use of contemporary technology is student learning outcomes. When learning outcomes for a particular course are both concrete and assessable, it is easier to determine the appropriate technology for the class. In my own teaching, I approached technology very differently in the two core courses I taught most recently at PLTS. For my "Living Tradition" course (a hybrid class offered to both residential and online students), I created multimedia presentations that could be viewed online via Moodle, and had students engage in online threaded discussions. Since half of the students were on campus, they gathered with

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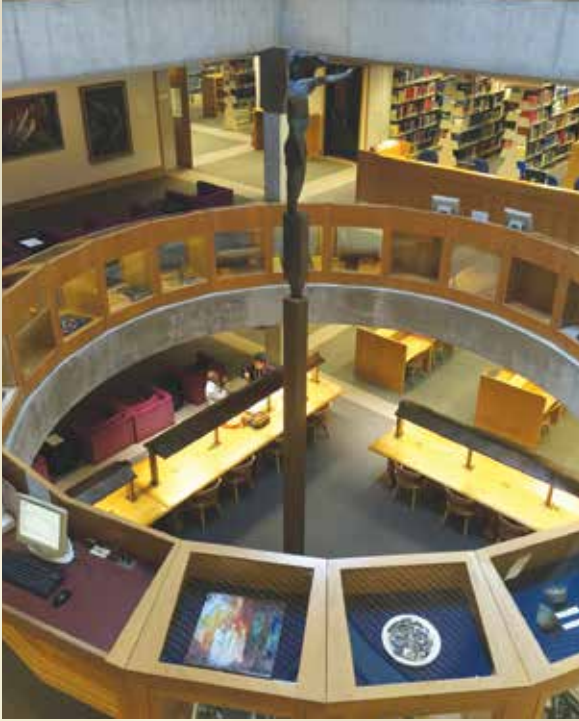


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“Technology in today’s classroom is only as good as the pedagogy behind it.”

— *Kyle K. Schiefelbein*

me weekly for discussions that were then continued online. On the other hand, the “American Lutheranism” course is offered only to residential students and is primarily discussion-based. Apart from using Moodle to upload course readings, I kept the computer-based technology to a minimum. Rather, I used the classroom furniture as my technology, organizing tables, chairs, and whiteboard in such a way to maximize our ability to discuss the content at hand. Both these courses use technology that originate from the learning outcomes.

An important component to both online and residential courses is the idea of “presence”—how are the students and instructors present to one another in the learning experience? Good course design is no longer restricted by geography and time, and technology helps bridge the gap between time zones and continents.

The desire to increase presence goes beyond the classroom environment to other parts of the educational experience. The GTU library continues to expand its digital collection, and this fall has added virtual reference to its list of services. Students can chat instantly with a reference librarian through the library website and through Moodle. The GTU has provided a live video stream of Commencement for the last two years, as well as for the Judith Berling symposium in May—and provides continuing access to recordings of these events via its website. These video streams of events allow people at a distance to be present here at the GTU to connect with important ways in which religion meets the world.

The GTU is also bridging technology and theological education by creating a new space on campus where instructors and students can experiment with

various classroom pedagogies. This fall, the GTU is redesigning the Library Teaching/Computer Lab to serve as an active learning classroom. The redesign involves removing the computers and furniture, and installing movable tables and chairs and multiple presentation monitors. The room will also have the option of adding other technology, including video conferencing. All GTU faculty will be able to receive training and take advantage of this state-of-the-art classroom to create learning spaces for interfaith and ecumenical engagement, not only in their specific classes but also as a model for such engagement in the wider world. I will also be teaching a course focused on effectively incorporating technology into the theological/religious studies classroom, as a way of better preparing our doctoral students for twenty-first-century theological education.

One thing I appreciate about the poster in my office is that it does not suggest that the 16th-century book should be replaced by computer-based technology. At least from my perspective, the book in the photograph serves as one of the many pieces of technology mentioned by the poster. The website serves as the bridge between the book and the virtual museum attendee. I’m exciting to continue working with the faculty and students of the GTU to continue building bridges between modern technologies and theological education today.

Kyle K. Schiefelbein (PhD, 2015) is the GTU Course Design Specialist. From 2013 to 2016 he was Coordinator of Online and Continuing Education at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, where he continues to serve as adjunct faculty.



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“So much of the suffering in the world is that we don’t seem to know how to engage in interreligious dialogue. We need to be able to learn from each other, and I think that’s the most valuable thing about the GTU. We have to learn how to have these conversations, these intellectual explorations. The GTU is leading the way in this—and that makes me hopeful.”

—Dr. Suzanne Holland (PhD, '97)

Professor of Science and Values, University of Puget Sound

Your financial support is vital to keep the GTU’s engagement with the world’s religious traditions vibrant and fruitful, and to sustain our scholars as they continue to do exceptional work. Will you support this essential work with a gift today?

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Upcoming Events

“The Past is a Foreign Country: Poland Confronted with Holocaust History”

A CJS event featuring Dr. Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs and Dr. Sven Erik-Rose

Tuesday, November 1, 5:00 pm

Flora Lamson Hewlett Library, 2400 Ridge Rd., Berkeley

Distinguished Faculty Lecture

“Academic Life and Scholarship as Spiritual Practice” by Dr. Elizabeth Liebert, Professor of Spiritual Life at SFTS

Thursday, November 10, 7:00 pm

PSR Chapel, 1798 Scenic Avenue, Berkeley

GTU Alumni Reception at AAR/SBL

Connect with GTU alumni and students; meet our new Dean, Dr. Uriah Kim; and honor our 2016 Alumnus of the Year, Dr. Jeffrey Richey (PhD, '00)

Saturday, November 19, 8:00 pm

Hilton Palacio del Rio, San Antonio, TX

“The Hermitage of Landscape”

Works by Nicholas Coley

Exhibition continues through December 9

Doug Adams Gallery, 2465 Le Conte Ave., Berkeley

All events are open to the public, unless noted.
Visit www.gtu.edu/events for more information.